



M E D I A R E L E A S E

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND INSURANCE

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STATE FIRE MARSHAL GIVES TIPS ON HOLIDAY SAFETY

Candles, Christmas Trees and Decorations Should Be Used Safely

Nashville, TN. - Tennessee State Fire Marshal Paula A. Flowers wants to remind Tennesseans to keep fire safety on their minds as they decorate their homes for the holidays.

"Home decorations make a home cheerful and festive, but decorations such as string lights and Christmas trees introduce fire risks," said Flowers. "All too often, we hear of a family that has lost its home, or worse, suffered an injury or death due to a fire caused by these decorations."

The risks can be minimized by following a few fire safety tips:

- Try to keep live trees as moist as possible by giving them plenty of water daily. Do not purchase a tree that is dry or dropping needles.
- Choose a sturdy tree stand designed not to tip over. When purchasing an artificial tree, be sure it is labeled as fire-retardant.
- Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from heat sources, such as fireplaces and radiators. Try to position the tree near an outlet so that electrical cords are not running long distances.
- Choose decorations made with flame-resistant, flame-retardant or non-combustible materials.
- Keep candles away from decorations and other combustible materials, and do not use candles to decorate Christmas trees.
- Purchase only lights and electrical decorations bearing the name of an independent testing lab, and follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation and maintenance.
- Carefully inspect new and previously used light strings and replace damaged items before plugging lights in. Do not overload extension cords.
- Don't mount lights in any way that can damage the cord's wire insulation (i.e., use clips, not nails).
- Turn off all light strings and decorations before leaving the house or going to bed.

"Keeping fire safety in mind and following a few fire safety guidelines will ensure that Tennesseans have a safe and happy holiday season," Flowers said.

For more information about the Tennessee State Fire Marshal's office, please visit www.state.tn.us/commerce/sfm.

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